

ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

A Newsletter for the Russian Orthodox Parish of Saint Panteleimon, Gosford

~ Number 17, 21 September 2003 ~

THE NATIVITY (OR BIRTH) OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

Рождество Пресвятой Владычицы нашей Богородицы и Приснодевы Марии

The parents of the Holy Virgin were called Joachim and Anna. They were very good people who tried to do God's will and who gave lots of money to the poor. They loved each other very much. Joachim came from the family of King David, so he had royal blood. Anna came from a family of priests. They were very old and although they had been married for 50 years, they had no children. Because of this, they were very sad and ashamed. In those days, having no children was thought of as a terrible thing, a punishment from God.

One day a sad thing happened. Joachim had travelled all the way to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice to God in the temple. The High Priest was very rude to Joachim and said, "You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands". Other men, who had been blessed with children, all pushed Joachim out of the way.

At home, Anna looked out of the window and saw a mother bird in a nest with her babies. She was sad, seeing that even the birds had babies, while she had none. When Joachim came home again, he and Anna were both so sad that they cried and cried. They prayed with many tears that God would give them a child. They remembered how He had given a baby to Abraham and Sarah when they were very old. They promised that they would dedicate the baby, if God gave them one, to His service. Almighty God heard their prayers. He sent an angel to tell them that they would have a baby and that they should call her Mary. Because Mary would herself later have the most special baby of all - our Lord Jesus Christ - Saints Joachim and Anna are called by a special name: the "Ancestors of God".

Saints Joachim and Anna lived in Nazareth, and this is where the Mother of God was born. When she was 3 years old, Saints Joachim and Anna kept their promise to dedicate her to God. They took her to Jerusalem, to the temple. The High Priest (a good one, this time) was told by God to take her into the "Holy of Holies", a part of the temple that was like the altar in our churches. This was very unusual - even the High Priest was only allowed in there once a year! This showed that something very special would happen to the Virgin Mary.

Mary lived at the temple until she was 14, reading and studying and doing handiwork. After this, she was given into the care of a distant relative, Joseph, who was already 80 years old.

The Orthodox Church celebrates the day of the Virgin Mary's birth on September 21st (September 8th on the Church calendar). It is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of our Church. The day on which she went into the temple is another Great Feast; it is celebrated on December 4th (November 21st on the Church calendar).

New Year's Day on the Church Calendar is September 1st. Because of this, the first Great Feast of the Church year is the Feast of the Nativity (or Birth) of the Mother of God. This reminds us that the birth of the Holy Virgin Mary was the first step in saving us from sin and death.

PARISH LIFE: GOOD NEWS!

On September 7th, with Vladika's blessing, we held an Extraordinary Parish Meeting to discuss the purchase of an industrial unit at West Gosford in which to establish a temporary church parish centre. The motion to purchase this property was passed unanimously. On September 18th, Father James gave a presentation to the Diocesan Council outlining our plans, seeking Diocesan assistance for the purchase. The Council is composed of Vladika, the Diocesan Secretary Rev. Michael Boikov, 5 elected clergymen, and 5 elected laymen. Although initially concerned at the prospect of a church in such a location (and worried that we would become too attached to our church-in-a-warehouse!), the Council agreed to support our plans. To this end, the Council offered to contribute 25% of the purchase price as a Diocesan investment, meaning that ownership would be shared 75%-25% between the parish and Diocese. As we are able to borrow 70% of the sale price, we now only need to put forward 5% (or \$10,000) of the sale price up front! This is a great help to us, and a great gesture of goodwill towards our growing parish. The parish council will now proceed with negotiations over the purchase, and with planning for the fitout of the new property to meet our needs. This brings us significantly closer to having a permanent home of our own, however humble! Glory be to God for all things!

2003 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Общее Годовое Собрание Прихожан

Please note that our first parish Annual General Meeting will be held this year on November 2nd, following Divine Liturgy. The Annual General Meeting hears reports from the Rector, Starosta, and Treasurer, and elects the parish council for the year to come. Only parish members are entitled to vote. All regular worshippers at Gosford are encouraged to take up parish membership prior to the meeting.

IMPORTANT CHURCH DATES IN SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

Two Great Feasts fall during the month of September: the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, which we celebrate today, and the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrated on September 27th each year, and which falls this year on a Saturday. It is different from all the other Great Feasts because it is the only one that does not recall events in the lives of our Lord Jesus Christ or His all-holy Mother. This feast is based on two things that happened to the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. The first is the finding of the Cross on Golgotha by Saint Helena and the subsequent raising up ("exaltation") of it for people to see, and the second is the return of the Cross to Jerusalem many years later, the Cross having been seized in war by the Persians. Even though it is Great Feast, we keep a fast (пост) on this day, in remembrance of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

October is a month of great festivity in our diocese and especially in Sydney, as two parishes, Saints Peter & Paul Cathedral in Strathfield and the Church of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin in Cabramatta, both celebrate the 50th anniversary of their founding. Metropolitan Lavr will be here for the celebrations, presiding at services at Strathfield on October 18-19th and at Cabramatta on October 25-26th. On both occasions, a pannikhida will be served at 5.30pm on Saturday for all departed parish clergy, founders, benefactors and parishioners, followed by the all-night vigil at 6.00pm. Divine Liturgy on the Sunday morning will be followed by a moleben of thanksgiving to God and a festive luncheon. Although we will have a service in Gosford on the 19th, all are encouraged to attend these jubilee services.

October 14th is the feast of the Holy Protection (or Intercession) of the Mother of God (Покровъ Пресвятая Владичицы наша Богородицы и Приснодевы Марии), a greatly-loved feast of the Russian Church, and the patronal feast at Cabramatta and our Cathedral in Melbourne. Interestingly, it was also the feast of the now-demolished church at the Greta Migrant Camp in the Hunter Valley, the furnishing of which were passed on to the parish of St Nicholas, Wallsend. Services will be held in most Sydney churches at 6.00pm on Monday evening and 9.00am on Tuesday morning. Cabramatta's service will be preceded by a blessing of water at 8.00am. In view of this year's jubilee & his past association with the parish, Father James will be serving at Cabramatta.

FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

"In all your undertakings and in every way of life, whether you are living in obedience, or are not subjecting your work to anyone, whether in outward or in spiritual matters, let it be your rule and practice to ask yourself: Am I really doing this in accordance with God's will? For example, when we, I mean the beginners, carry out some task, be it great or small, and if from this action humility is not added to our soul, then in my opinion, we are not doing it according to God's will".

Saint John Climacus

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL ARE ASKED FOR:

The sick & suffering: Metropolitan Vitaly, our parishioners Fyodor & Antonina Tialshinsky, Ioann, Alexander, Nina, Alexandra, child Ksenia

Special needs: Katherine, David, Helen, Marina, Paraskeva, Antonina

Preparing for marriage: Gregory & Heather

Newly-married: Peter & Svetlana (to be married today, 21/9!)

Newly-reposed: Olga (Chemodakova), Anna (Bukovec)

GOSFORD SERVICES IN OCTOBER

Services in Gosford are now always on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month.

5 th October	Sunday	Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
19 th October	Sunday	Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
5-го октября	воскресенье	Божественная Литургия	9.00 ч.у.
19-го октября	воскресенье	Божественная Литургия	9.00 ч.у.

IMPORTANT NEWCASTLE SERVICES IN OCTOBER

For those interested, regular Sunday services in Newcastle are now always on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of each month at 9.00am. Vigil is always served on the preceding Saturday evening at 6.00pm.

26th September	Friday	All-night vigil with the bringing out of the cross	6.00 pm
27th September	Saturday	UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS & LIFE-GIVING CROSS	
		Divine Liturgy	9.00 am
		All-night vigil	6.00 pm
26-го сентября	пятница	Всенощное бдение с выносом Св. Креста	6.00 ч.в.
27-го сентября	суббота	ВСЕМИРНОЕ ВОЗДВИЖЕНИЕ ЧЕСТНАГО И ЖИВОТВОРЯЩАГО КРЕСТА	
		Божественная Литургия	9.00 ч.у.
		Всенощное бдение	6.00 ч.в.

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. Let him know at least a week in advance if there is anything that you would like included (prayer requests, news, announcements). You can call him on 02-9721-2659 or email him at fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au.